

8·375 in. The bill was coral-red; the irides of the brightest yellow, and the legs and claws of a rusty-brown colour. The bird was apparently solitary, and climbing the bough of a large tree.

[To be continued.]

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XXXVIII.—*On rare or little-known Limicolæ.*

By JAMES EDMUND HARTING, F.L.S., F.Z.S.

(Plate XII.)

[Continued from p. 310.]

NOTWITHSTANDING the vagrant habits of the species which compose the present group, and the increasing researches of naturalists in all quarters of the globe, it is remarkable that a bird which was described more than a century ago by Linnæus should still be one of the rarest and least-known. From a perusal of all that has hitherto been published with reference to this species, it would appear that those who followed more immediately in the wake of Linnæus did little else than copy his original description, perpetuating by so doing the erroneous habitat which had been assigned to the bird, and adding little or nothing to its history. Under the name of *Platalea pygmæa* or *Eurynorhynchus griseus* certain authors have created some confusion by describing birds which were properly referable to some other species, while the few original descriptions on record have all been taken from specimens which were procured in the winter plumage. For a long time the true habitat of *Eurynorhynchus* was unknown; and even at the present day its precise geographical range remains undetermined.

In the present paper I propose to set forth all the trustworthy information which I have been able to obtain concerning this remarkable bird, to point out the localities whence authentic specimens have been procured, and especially to direct attention to the summer plumage, which hitherto, so far as I am aware, has neither been figured nor described.

The synonymy will stand as follows:—

2. EURYNORHYNCHUS\* PYGMEUS.

*Platalea pygmæa*, Linn. Mus. Ad. Frid. ii. Prodr. p. 26 (1764); *Id.* Syst. Nat. i. p. 231 (12 ed., 1766); P. L. S. Müller, Linn. Natursyst. ii. p. 363 (1773); Herm. Tab. Aff. An. p. 135 (1777); Gmel. Syst. Nat. i. p. 615 (1788); Lath. Ind. Orn. ii. p. 669 (1790); *Id.* Gen. Hist. B. ix. p. 7 (1824); Donndorff, Orn. Beytr. i. p. 942 (1794); Thunberg, K. Vet. Ac. Handl. (Holm.) 1816, pp. 194–198, pl. vi.; Shaw, Gen. Zool. xi. p. 645 (1819).

“*Eurynorhynchus griseus*, Nils.,” Temm. Man. d’Orn. ii. p. 594 (2 ed. 1820); Nilsson, Orn. Succ. ii. p. 29 (1821); Cuvier, Règ. An. i. p. 528 (1829); *Id.*, Griffith’s ed., iii. p. 383 (1829); Lesson, Tr. d’Orn. p. 562 (1831); *Id.* Compl. Buffon, ix. p. 432 (1837); Hartlaub, R. Z. 1841, p. 5.

*Eurynorhynchus pygmæus*, Pearson, J. A. S. B. v. p. 127 (1836); *Id.* As. Res. xix. p. 69, pl. ix. (1836); Bonap. Comp. List, p. 49 (1838); *Id.* C. R. xliii. p. 596 (1856); Hartlaub, R. Z. 1842, p. 36; *Id.* J. f. O. 1859, pp. 325–329; Lafresnaye, R. Z. 1842, p. 402, pl. ii.; Schlegel, Rev. Crit. p. 97 (1844); *Id.* Handleiding, i. p. 436, pl. vi. fig. 73; G. R. Gray, Gen. B. iii. p. 580, pls. 152 & 156. fig. 6 (1845); Reichenbach, Av. Syst. Nat. Grall. pl. xiii. (1849); Selater, P. Z. S. 1859, p. 201; Hartlaub, J. f. O. 1859, pp. 325–329; Cabanis, *tom. cit.* pp. 327, 328, notes; *Id. op. cit.* 1860, pp. 299, 300; Lilljeborg, *tom. cit.* p. 299; Von Pelzeln, *tom. cit.* pp. 460, 461; Swinhoe, P. Z. S. 1863, p. 317; *Id. op. cit.* 1864, p. 272; Jerdon, B. Ind. iii. pp. 692, 693 (1864); Blyth, Ibis, 1867, p. 169; A. Newton, *tom. cit.* pp. 235, 236, note.

*Eurynorhynchus orientalis*, Blyth, Ann. & Mag. N. H. xiii. pp. 178, 179 (1844); *Id.* Cat. B. Mus. Calc. p. 270 (1849); Swinhoe, Ibis, 1867, pp. 234, 235.

*Hab.* Mouths of the Gauges, and east coast of Bay of Bengal

\* It seems unnecessary to follow the various spellings or misspellings to which this generic name has been subject, such as *Eurhinorhynchus*, *Eurinorhynchus*, *Eurynorhynchus*, *Eurinorhynchus*, *Eurinorinchus*, *Eurino-rhynchus*, *Eurinorincus*, *Eurinorhynchus*, and so forth; for there can be little doubt, notwithstanding Dr. Cabanis’s remark (J. f. O. 1859, p. 328, note), that, as originally printed, Prof. Nilsson’s is the true orthography:—*Eurynorhynchus*: th. εὐρύνω, dilato; ῥύγχος, rostrum. The same may be said of *Platela* and *Platalea* for *Platalea*, and *pygma* for *pygmæa*, to say nothing of *griseus* for *griseus*!

(*Blyth, Jerdon*); Edmonstone's Island, Saugur Sand (*Newcombe teste Pearson*); Saugur Island (*teste Hartlaub*); Chittagong (*J. E. Bruce, Chapman teste Blyth*); Arracan (*Lloyd teste Pearson*); Amherst in Tenasserim (*O'Reilly teste Blyth*); Amoy (*Swinhoe*); Behring's Straits, N. E. Asia (*Barrow teste Sclater*).

*Description (Adult in winter).*—Bill black, longer than the head, flat, dilated considerably at the extremity in a rhomboidal shape. Tongue broad and smooth. Forehead, cheeks, throat, and underparts pure white; crown, nape and sides of neck, back, wings, and upper tail-coverts dusky brown, each feather margined more or less with pale grey. Wings long and pointed; shafts of the primaries white; first quill-feather the longest. Tail short, rounded, consisting of twelve feathers, the two middle feathers the longest and darkest in colour. Legs and toes black, moderately long, slender, three toes in front, one behind, margined along the sides; a slight membrane connecting the base of the middle and outer toe on each foot. Total length 6 inches; bill 1 inch; wing, from carpus, 3·7; tarsus 0·9. (Exempl. typ. in Mus. Upsal. *vide auctt. citt.*)

*Adult in summer* (hitherto undescribed).—Bill as above. Head, neck, breast, and back ferruginous; the feathers of the head, nape, and back with dark brown centres; those of the throat and breast slightly margined with white. Underparts, from the breast downwards, becoming gradually whiter towards the tail. Primaries somewhat darker than in winter. Legs and toes black. (Exempl. in Mus. Acad. Oxon.)

The earliest notice of this species is to be found in an octavo catalogue usually appended to his 'Museum Ludovicæ Ulricæ Reginæ Suecorum,' &c., published by Linnæus in 1764; but entitled 'Museum Adolphi Friderici Regis Suecorum,' &c., 'Tomi secundi Prodromus'\*. He, no doubt from the form of the bill, referred this species to the genus *Platalea*; but that he did so with hesitation is shown by the following remark:—"Mirum parvam adco avem, quæ minima† omnium nobis notarum Gral-

\* This promised *second* volume never appeared; the first, in folio, which is well known, was published in 1754.

† Only one very small species of *Tringa* (*T. pusilla*) was known to Linnæus even in 1766, and that apparently on Brisson's authority.

larum est, dari in genere, ubi altera species maxima; simile exemplum non novi." A comparison, however, shows that beyond this resemblance it has really no connexion with *Platalea*. Its affinities, as pointed out by Cuvier and Temminck, are certainly with the genus *Tringa*. Bonaparte, in his 'Tableaux paralléliques des Échassiers,' has placed it between *Calidris arenaria* and *Tringa platyrhyncha*; but while assenting to the generic relationship claimed for it, I venture to demur only to the species near which it has been placed. The *Tringinae* may be conveniently divided into two large groups—the one comprising those species which adopt a rufous plumage in the breeding-time, the other those which assume a blackish dress at the same season. It will be found, on separating a series in this way, that the species thus brought together have other characters in common besides the peculiar seasonal change of colour. Taking into consideration, therefore, not only the structure but likewise the character of the nuptial plumage, the conclusion at which I arrive is, that the species now before us should be placed between *Ereunetes petrificatus*, Illiger, and *Tringa subarcuata*. At the same time, it differs sufficiently from both to justify the course which Nilsson adopted in forming for its reception the new genus *Eurynorhynchus*. In this genus it at present stands alone.

Gmelin, Latham, and Shaw all followed Linnæus in their description of this bird; and, indeed, until the year 1836 it does not appear that any other than the original type-specimen existed\*. It is very doubtful whether Bancroft, who in 1769 published an 'Essay on the Natural History of Guiana,' was acquainted with this bird, although under the name of *Platalea* he describes (p. 171) a small species of the group *Limicolæ*. We may consider his remarks from two points of view. In treating of the ornithology of Guiana, he may have included *Platalea pygmæa* in his list of species only because Linnæus had erroneously supposed that its habitat was Surinam. On the other hand, if we give him credit for having described such species

\* According to Prof. Lilljeborg, in 1860 this specimen was still in the Museum at Upsala (*cf.* Journ. f. Orn. 1860, p. 299).



only as he had himself observed, we must conclude that he mistook some other bird for that to which he refers. Dr. Hartlaub has expressed an opinion that Bancroft's bird was probably the *Ereunetes* of Illiger; but I do not think that such a conclusion is justified by the author's description. Bancroft remarks (*l. c.*), "Here is also the *Platalæa* of *Linnaeus*, with a flattish bill, dilated, orbiculated, and flat at the point. It is of the size of a Sparrow: the upper part of its body is brown, but the lower is white; and it has four toes palmated." From this last statement I should infer that the bird was most probably *Phalaropus fulicarius* in winter plumage.

In the Transactions of the Academy of Sciences of Stockholm for 1816 (*l. c.*) the Swedish naturalist Thunberg published a full description of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper under the title of *Platalea pygmæa*\*; and subsequently Nilsson†, in his 'Ornithologia Suecica' (*l. c.*), founded on this bird the new genus *Eurynorhynchus*, at the same time bestowing the specific name of *griscus*, which more recent investigation has shown to be applicable to this bird in the winter plumage only. Here, again, it seems necessary to correct a mistake which has been made by several authors in attributing to Nilsson the paper which appeared in the 'Transactions' above mentioned, Nilsson's observations having been published five years later in his 'Ornithologia Suecica.'

Lesson has included this species in his various works, but his notions respecting it seem to have been very vague. In his 'Manuel d'Ornithologie' he remarks (*l. c.*), "Cet oiseau nous semble être le *Tyrannus* bec en cuiller," referring to a genus (*Tyrannus*) which is as unlike it as well can be! In his 'Traité' (*l. c.*) he says, "Du nord de l'ancien et du nouveau continent; très rare en Europe; le muséum en possède un individu tué près de

\* "*Platalea pygmæa* vidare beskriiven, med figur, af C. P. Thunberg."

† It would seem as if Nilsson had previously communicated his intention of founding this genus to Temminck, since the last-named naturalist mentioned it (*ut supra cit.*) in his work published in 1820, while Nilsson's second volume, containing the description, did not appear till 1821. Cuvier or his printer put "Wilson" for "Nilsson;" and this error has been frequently copied.

Paris''\*; and the last-mentioned remark is repeated in his 'Complément des œuvres de Buffon' (*l. c.*). Three years only after this statement appeared, Dr. Hartlaub searched the Museum in Paris for the specimen referred to, but without success; and I myself more recently have likewise been unable to find it there. Dr. Hartlaub is of opinion† that Lesson must have mistaken some other bird for *Eurynorhynchus*, and that it was an error to suppose that this species had ever been killed in France‡. When we call to mind the occasional appearance in Western Europe of many other eastern species, it cannot be asserted that the occurrence of *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus* in France is impossible. At the same time, it may be confidently stated that up to the present time there is no evidence to show that this species has been found even in Europe.

In 1836, Mr. Pearson, who was then Curator of the Asiatic Society's Museum at Calcutta, published in the 'Asiatic Researches' (*l. c.*) an able description of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper from a specimen in the winter plumage, which had been procured on Edmonstone's Island, Saugur Sand, and presented to the Society's Museum by Mr. Newcombe; and he very properly took this opportunity of restoring the specific name which had been bestowed by Linnæus. Subsequently Mr. Blyth§ expressed a doubt whether this specimen was identical with the bird described by Linnæus, and in consequence named it provisionally *Eurynorhynchus orientalis*. He has, however, lately informed me of a change in his views; and recent investigation shows that there is no ground for supposing that there is more than one species of this genus. Mr. Pearson illustrated his

\* It was probably on the strength of this assertion that Bonaparte introduced this species in his 'Comparative List of the Birds of Europe and North America' (*l. c.*) as a European species.

† Revue Zoologique, 1842, p. 36.

‡ M. Jules Verreaux has recently informed me that no specimen of *Eurynorhynchus* ever existed in the Paris Museum, and that the bird to which Lesson referred under the name of *Eurynorhynchus griseus*, and subsequently under the name of *Erolia varia*, Vieillot, is nothing else than a *Tringa subarcuata* with the hind toes cut off, and the bill remodelled with the aid of some warm water!

§ Ann. & Mag. N. H. 1844, xiii. pp. 178, 179.

description with a representation of the specimen to which he referred; and this places its identity beyond a doubt. It may here be convenient to notice the figures which have already been published of this very remarkable bird. Commencing with that of Thunberg in 1816, Mr. Pearson's is next in order of date. A third was given by Lafresnaye in the 'Revue Zoologique' for 1842, to illustrate a valuable notice of the bird by Dr. Hartlaub, which had appeared in the same journal the same year\*. These three figures are little more than outlines, and afford no idea of the distribution of colour. In 1849 Mr. G. R. Gray published his valuable 'Genera of Birds,' and here for the first time we find a well-executed plate by Mitchell of *Eurynorhynchus pygmaeus* in the winter plumage. Reichenbach in the same year engraved the head and bill in his work as above quoted; while the latest figure, so far as I am aware, is that given by Prof. Schlegel in the plates to his 'Handleiding.'

Since these illustrations have all been taken from specimens in the winter plumage, and as the nuptial dress has never yet been figured, the accompanying plate (Plate XII.), it is believed,



will be very acceptable to ornithologists, while the woodcuts of the bill, from sketches made from a freshly-killed bird by Mr. Swinhoe (Ibis, 1867, pp. 234, 235), will convey an accurate idea of its singular proportions. The specimen from which the plate is drawn by Mr. J. G. Keulemans was obtained in Behring's Straits, on one of the Arctic expeditions, under Capt.

\* This figure is stated to have been copied from an original drawing by Natterer of the type-specimen at Upsala.





Moore, in H.M.S. 'Plover.' It was exhibited by Mr. Selater, on behalf of the owner, Mr. John Barrow, F.R.S., at one of the Zoological Society's Meetings in 1859; and Mr. Barrow has recently presented it, with the remainder of his collection, to the New Museum at Oxford, where it may now be seen. I am not aware of the existence of any other example in this stage of plumage. In the case of so rare a species a list of the specimens which are at present known to exist will, doubtless, be interesting to many. I have therefore been at some pains to collect the following information:—

1. The type-specimen of Linnæus, locality unknown, but said (no doubt erroneously) to have been from Surinam, was in the Museum at Upsala in 1860 (*cf.* Journ. f. Orn. 1860, p. 299).

2. One from Edmonstone's Island, Saugur Sand, presented by Mr. Newcombe to the Museum of the Asiatic Society at Calcutta in 1836 (Journ. As. Soc. Beng. v. p. 127).

3. One met with in Arracan by Capt. Lloyd in 1836 (Asiatic Researches, xix. p. 71).

4. One obtained in the Calcutta Bazaar 1840 (Ann. & Mag. N. H. xiii. 1844, p. 178).

5. One from Saugur Island, mouth of the Ganges, in the Derby Museum at Liverpool. Purchased by the late Earl Derby from Mr. Leadbeater, about the year 1840 (Rev. Zool. 1842, p. 6).

6, 7. Two procured in 1846, at Amherst, in Tenasserim, by Mr. E. O'Ryley (Cat. Birds Mus. As. Soc. Calcutta, p. 270).

8–11. Three specimens in spirits, and one skin, sent by Mr. J. E. Bruce from Chittagong 1856 (Journ. As. Soc. Beng. xxv. p. 445).

12–23. Twelve killed at two shots(!) by Mr. Chapman in Chittagong (Journ. f. Orn. 1859, pp. 326, 327).

24. One in summer plumage from Behring's Straits, by the expedition under Capt. Moore in H.M.S. 'Plover' (Proc. Zool. Soc. 1859, p. 201). Now in the New Museum at Oxford.

No specimen of this bird is to be found either in the British Museum or in the Museum of the Jardin des Plantes at Paris. Those who have had the opportunity of observing the habits of the Spoon-billed Sandpiper assert that it frequents the mud-flats

at the mouths of rivers, and the sands of the sea-shore, where it consorts with various species of *Tringa*, and obtains from the surface the abundant harvest of food which is always left by a receding tide.

Of its nidification nothing is yet known; but, as the same may be said of *Tringa canutus*, *Tringa subarcuata*, and other *Limicole*, we can only look wistfully towards that large tract of continent in Northern and North-eastern Asia still unexplored, and dream of the oological treasures which are surely there enclosed.

### XXXIX.—*Notes on some African Birds.*

By the Rev. H. B. TRISTRAM, M.A., LL.D., F.R.S., &c.

AMONG the many rarities in the last collection (alas! that we must say the *last*) sent home by the late Mr. Andersson from Damaraland and Ovampoland is one novelty, a very pretty little Lark, distinct from any which I can ascertain to have been described from South Africa, and to which I propose to give the name of

#### MEGALOPHONUS ANDERSSONI, sp. n.

M. capite læte castaneo-rufo; dorso fusco, plumarum parte mediâ nigricante: scapularibus fusco-nigris, castaneo terminatis: primariis nigricanti-brunneis, rufo externe limbatis: rectricibus fusco-nigris, duobus mediis castaneo-fuscis, pogonio cinnamomeo: corpore subtus (gula, abdomine) albo, in lateribus rufo-tincto, et collari pectorali cinnamomeo: utrinque macula brunneo-nigra jugulari: linea postoculari et superciliis albis: rostro carneo: pedibus et tarsis pallide brunneis.

Long. tot. 5·2, rostri a rictu 0·5, alæ 3·15, caudæ 2·2, tarsi 0·65, hall. c. ung. 0·5, poll. angl.

The type specimen was shot by Mr. Andersson at Otjimbingue, Damaraland, 13th March, 1865, and is marked by him doubtfully as "*Alauda spleniata*, Strickl.?" On referring to Strickland's description of that species (*Contrib. Ornith.* 1852, p. 152), it is evident that they are very different, and that Strickland's bird is identical with *Megalophonus cinereus*